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UNCLAS TEGUCIGALPA 000731

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/PDA(MBUCKLEY), IIP/G/WHA (DDIPASQUALE),

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON IRAQ 3/21

1. For the second day all four dailies had full front page coverage and special reports of almost six interior pages with a variety of photos of the war.

2. Liberal Party Tegucigalpa-based daily La Tribuna: "Inferno in Iraq;" moderate daily El Heraldo: "War, Total Offensive;" San Pedro liberal daily Tiempo: "Land offensive started in the south--without resistance" and San Pedro Sula-based liberal daily La Prensa: "No price increase on fuel because of War: President Maduro." Beginning last night, radio and all TV stations and print media have been devoting an impressive amount of coverage to the conflict, using as sources CNN in Spanish and other international news sources."

2. The morning news programs repeated the international reports several times. Radio and TV stations are running spots telling their audiences to stay tuned for complete coverage of the war. Newspaper "El Heraldo" has special radio spots announcements inviting readers to buy the newspaper to keep up on developments in the war".

3. "Telenoticias" showed some Desert Storm footage last night to explain events during the first war and featured interviews with several Ambassadors to Honduras.

4. Italian Ambassador Stefano Cachaquero: "We have said very clearly since the beginning that we support the United States in its efforts. The Italian government is providing support to the airfields that are open to U.S. military troops, and Italy will contribute Italian peace forces to the reconstruction of Iraq.

5. Ambassador of Mexico Walter Astie: - "Obviously we are in favor of Iraq disarming and the elimination of a threat to other countries. We are against terrorism but we still continue to believe that the best solution for this problem is through negotiations through the United Nations.

6. Ambassador of France Michell Avignon: "To begin military operations is going to be the unilateral decision of President Bush who, he remembers perfectly, said that the United Nations had failed to carry out its responsibilities, but that he would carry out his. I am sorry to say, but that is called prepotency and the U.S. is the first nation of the world, the first force of the world, so in place of the force of right, it is the force of might, this is what we are going to experience."

Palmer